

"I deeply hope that the United States, which under your leadership has done so much to find a just solution, will promptly recognize the Provisional Government of the new Jewish state. The world, I think, would regard it as especially appropriate that the greatest living democracy should be the first to welcome the newest into the family of nations." – Chaim Weizmann, May 13, 1948

Sixty-one years after the establishment of the State of Israel, we reaffirm the unwavering commitment of one great democracy to another. As melting pots of diversity and bastions of political, economic and personal freedom, the United States and Israel are deeply bound by the unique values shared only by the world's true democracies.

Surrounded by oppressive dictatorships that deny their citizens basic human rights, Israel remains a flickering hope that people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, Buddhists, Hindus, and Baha'is alike – can live together in freedom, peace and prosperity.

Despite its desire for peace with its neighbors, the people of Israel are forced to defend their right to exist on a daily basis. From Gaza to Lebanon to Syria to Iran, the enemies of Israel are clear in their objectives – the total annihilation of the democratic and Jewish State of Israel. We cannot and will not let that happen.

Democracies are strongest when they stick together. In the coming year, I look forward to working with my friends in Israel in strengthening our strategic bilateral relationship and ensuring this little democracy always has a bottom line.

To the people of Israel: Yom Ha'atzmaut Sameach – Happy Independence Day.